

## thy eternal summer shall not fade

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## thy eternal summer shall not fade

by [greyquills](#)

### Summary

Dream just smirks, leaning forward on the desk that separates them. The movement sends George's copy of *Hamlet* tumbling to the floor in a flurry of pages. George winces. "What do you think, George? Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?"

"Please don't," George says desperately.

A month into their senior year of high school, Dream spends the entirety of period three AP Literature class finding new and creative ways to flirt with George. George is understandably flustered.

### Notes

i starting writing this in a fevered state after a chem test while listening solely to glass animals on repeat. it then spiraled into a 4k+ word extravaganza that occupied my thoughts for at least 48 hours straight.

the self projection is real. no thoughts, head empty except ap english lit and dnf. this is probably far too niche even for ao3 so,,,,, apologies in advance motherfuckers.

rating is for language. title is from shakespeare's sonnet 18 because i fucking love shakespeare sonnets and you should too.

[APRIL 16TH UPDATE: jfc guys 10k hits?? that's insane. you're insane. i'm so so so thankful for all the support,,, i never expected my dumb little niche fic to blow up this much <33]

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

George stares at the whiteboard through bleary eyes, sinks further down in his seat, and considers the merits of falling asleep right here in class. It's period three—if he's going to fall asleep, now is the time to do it. In his head, he pulls out a blank piece of notepaper, smooths it out, and settles into the familiar cadence of thought.

Pros—he's exhausted. A quick power nap is all he needs to recharge his batteries.

Plus, he's pretty sure he has a pop quiz in calc next period. The teacher had been purposefully vague about their formula sheet last class, which he's learned to take as a telltale sign of future assessments. George hates calculus just about as much as he loves English and he's sure to flunk any type of pop quiz. A nap might just clear his head and refine whatever mathematical ability he has left.

Cons—he'll probably miss the analysis of act three scene three, which he's been looking forward to all month. Ever since he received his dog-eared and torn copy of *Hamlet*, George has made sure to read ahead by at least a couple of scenes. He's heard that the *Hamlet* essay is one of the hardest essays given during AP Lit, and he wants to be as prepared as possible.

To be completely honest, George is burned out. He's worked so hard this last week on schoolwork, college applications, AP prep... you name it. Surely he deserves five minutes of rest.

He glances up at his teacher, who is still droning on about the implications of Hamlet's madness in act three, and makes a split-second decision, closing his eyes and leaning against the wall. The stone is cool on his face, a much-needed reprieve from the heater that's still blasting hot air a few feet away. This school is either incredibly hot or incredibly cold—there's no in-between when it comes to temperature.

His much-deserved rest lasts all of five seconds before he feels a pinch on his arm and hears a whispered, "*Hey! George!*"

There's only one person bold (read: stupid) enough to bother George during Lit. With a sigh, he cracks his eyes open, looking blearily into the face of his rival. "What do you want, Dream?"

The other boy gives him a familiar reckless grin, face brightening underneath George's attention. The expression does funny things to George's stomach. "I'm bored."

George cuts a glance towards the front of the room. The teacher has both hands splayed across the board as he lectures, covering several words of a slide presumably titled *Ontology in 'The Mousetrap.'* From where George is sitting, all he can make out is a jumble of text in a font too small for him to read. Dream isn't wrong; this is one of their most boring classes yet. George thinks throwing himself out of the window might hurt less than having to sit here and listen.

He bristles anyway at Dream's comment. It's the *principle* of the thing, goddamnit. Dream is effortlessly good at English—he shouldn't be sitting here complaining about the class to George. They're so evenly matched that it's useless, since both of them make top grades and are practically guaranteed a five on the exam. "What?"

"I'm bored," Dream complains again, reaching out to poke George with his pencil lightly. He slumps across his desk, smiling up at George from underneath a bright halo—his mop of blond hair. There's an edge to it, though, a self-satisfied sort of smile that turns George's stomach. "Entertain me."

George's lips press into a thin line. He does his best to ignore the little flutter in his gut at the underlying tone in Dream's words. George tells himself that it's purely anger—he's just frustrated with Dream's inability to take anything seriously. That's all. "I'm not your performing monkey, Dream."

Dream smiles—a sly, taunting expression. "Do you want to be?" he asks from out of nowhere and... fuck. *Fuck*. Dream just doesn't know when to stop, does he?

"Fuck off. I'm not going to *en tertain* you," George hisses out between his teeth. He shoots Dream a frustrated look before snatching the pencil out of the other boy's hand.

"Hey!" Dream yelps, grappling for his stolen pencil. George holds it just out of reach as Dream leans across the desk desperately, long arms scrabbling for purchase. "Hey, you jackass, give that back!"

"Dream? George?" They both turn as one, frozen with surprise, as their teacher glares down at them. He's stopped lecturing to deal with their antics. Heart pounding, George flushes a bright red and slowly extricates his arms from Dream's grip, hyperaware of everyone's eyes on him. "Care to share with the class?"

"Nah," Dream says, careless, and he leans back in his seat.

George blinks. The teacher holds their gazes for a moment more before he sighs and the tension in his body loosens. He turns back to the board. "Alright. As I was saying, I want you to pay special attention to the way each character reacts to the play. It's not just Hamlet acting here—though an argument could be made that Hamlet has dropped the antic disposition entirely at this point. You've got Hamlet and Horatio watching Claudius..."

George tunes him out after the first few sentences. He knows this already; it's possible he's binge-watched every Crash Course video on *Hamlet* in existence. Instead, he leans over to Dream and hisses, "That wasn't funny."

Dream glances at him from the corner of his eye. "What wasn't funny?"

George manages not to splutter when he grinds out, "You—you *i mplied* that my presence in this class is solely to entertain you."

Dream's lip quirks. "It isn't?"

George wants to strangle the other boy. "I give up," he says, leaning back against the wall and closing his eyes. He can hear Dream shifting around in his seat. The ancient desk creaks with the movement. "Wake me in thirty minutes."

A beat. George's heart sinks. Then, hissed in a low voice: "*George*. Hey."

"I will fucking deck you if you say my name one more time," George says without opening his eyes.

Dream's smirk is audible. "Whatever you say, Gogy."

George is going to throttle him the minute they're out of the classroom. "I'm ignoring you," he informs Dream rather primly, pulling his hood up and making sure the strings of his hoodie are tight.

Dream gasps mockingly. George feels him lean over, his body heat warm. He attempts to drape himself over George, who is still trying to feign sleep. Dream clearly remembers to keep his voice down at the last minute when he murmurs, "George. Gogy. Georgie. Don't be like that, baby."

"Fuck off."

"Maybe I'll just quote Shakespeare at you until you crack," Dream tries, voice still smug. He props his arms behind his head and leans back. The desk almost shrieks in protest. "Don't test me, George."

George snorts. "That's assuming you even *know* any Shakespeare." It's a low blow, considering Dream sports a 98 in this class.

"*Of thy beauty do I question make,*" Dream says suddenly. *Sonnet 12*, George thinks, his eyes finally flying open and his cheeks heating. There's no reason this should fluster him. None at all. He's just angry that Dream has such a perfect memory. That's got to be it, right? "*That thou among the wastes of time must go.*"

"*Since sweets and beauties do themselves forsake / And die as fast as they see others grow,*" George mutters, against his will. When he makes eye contact with Dream, it's like a sharp spark of static electricity draws a line between them in midair. George flinches back a little as if burned, and he abruptly breaks eye contact with the other boy.

Dream shows no signs of having felt the searing brand of electricity. "See?" he says, almost triumphant, and he pokes George's arm again. "I knew you weren't asleep."

"Sonnet 12," George says, gravitating toward Dream despite himself. He's curious, unsure of the heightening tension between them that seems almost ready to snap. "Interesting choice."

Dream just smirks, leaning forward on the desk that separates them. The movement sends George's copy of *Hamlet* tumbling to the floor in a flurry of pages. George winces and scrambles to pick it up. Thankfully, the teacher has moved onto a different topic of conversation altogether and doesn't seem to notice. "I can quote something else if you want. What do you think, George? *S hall I compare thee to a summer's day?*"

"Please don't," George says desperately.

Dream's smirk is almost inappropriate. "*Thou art more lovely and more temperate,*" he croons. George feels his face burn bright red; he wants the ground to open up and swallow him whole. Dream's words make his blood sing, like something deep in his chest is reacting to the timeless poetry.

"Dream," he says under his breath. A warning. A line drawn in the sand, however faint. "Stop."

Dream doesn't stop. He switches sonnets entirely, again. His voice, when he speaks, holds a note of something more urgent. "*Being your slave, what should I do but tend / Upon the hours and times*

*of your desire?"*

George wants to scratch his skin off. The words burn him, like drinking a hot cup of coffee far too fast. Dream sounds like he's about to eat George alive, eyes dark with adrenaline. " *Dream* ," he hisses.

Dream's eyes bore into him like chips of flint. The moment stretches out between the two of them, interminable. George's heart is pounding so loudly in his ears that he's surprised no one else can hear it, and his skin burns all over.

He sees Dream make his decision. There's a challenge in his voice when the other, holding eye contact, slowly recites the third line of the sonnet. "*I have no precious time at all to spend—*"

George stands up abruptly, almost knocking his laptop clean off his desk. "I—I have to go the bathroom," he says as the subject of everyone's attention, far too loud and far too flustered. When the teacher gives him a short, surprised nod, he flees the room in the direction of the bathroom, face burning. He has no intention of returning.

Dream's eyes burn into the back of his neck as the door slams shut behind him.

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George decides to avoid Dream for the next week after their standoff in Lit, hoping that the strange tension he felt will blow over. It's a solid enough plan until he stumbles upon one tiny, insignificant detail: he sits next to Dream in four out of his six classes.

It had been his decision at the time, too. Curse his younger self. By sitting next to Dream on the first day of school, he'd meant to intimidate him, to size up the competition. That drive to compete had blossomed into a strange relationship: part friendship, part rivalry. Part George never being able to tear his eyes away from Dream's face.

And now it's just a huge pain in the ass. He can't properly avoid Dream if he's forced to sit next to the other boy for four hours straight.

George has a plan, though. After the unfortunate incident—he's not sure what else to call it, to be honest—in third period on Friday, he calls out sick the following Monday and Tuesday. George has always had perfect attendance, so he has plenty of absences to use up. His mother is visibly worried when he complains of a headache and a fever, but she doesn't press the matter. He almost feels bad about abusing her trust before he remembers the look in Dream's eyes on Friday: predatory, smug, like he had George right where he wanted him. Suddenly, he doesn't feel so guilty.

On Wednesday, he forces himself out of bed at six in the morning. When he stares at himself in his mirror, he's hyperaware of the dark bags under his eyes and the dead expression in his eyes. He shouldn't be freaking out. He's faced worse than this. He took the SAT last March with a blinding headache and still scored a 1580. *I can do this.*

Unfortunately, that sentiment lasts him only as far as period two—world history. His first class of the day with Dream. George stands at the door, willing himself to buck up and just *enter the damn classroom, for fuck's sake.*

"George?" comes a voice from behind him, and he nearly jumps out of his skin. "You okay there?"

George turns, relief coursing through his veins when he realizes who has spoken. It's just Sapnap, thank God, but the other boy is staring at George like he's got a few screws loose. "Hey, Sap."

"Yeah. Why are you standing in front of the door like you're having an internal crisis?" Sapnap

asks, frowning. When he pushes forward, George moves to stop him, but Sapnap just dodges George's arm and peeks around the doorframe. George can pinpoint the exact moment that Sapnap spots Dream—and the empty desk beside him—because the other boy's face lights up with a mischievous grin. He leans back, out of sight, before he punches George in the arm.

"What?" George says, trying for nonchalant. "What is it?"

"Dream, huh?" Sapnap says, clearly misunderstanding George's plight. He runs his tongue over his teeth. "Wouldn't have pegged you for a simp, George."

"Shut up!" George hisses, before groaning and throwing his head back against the locker with a *thunk*. "I'm not a simp."

"You were fucking *ogling* him, dude," Sapnap says, grinning.

"Whatever you say, *Simpnap*."

"That one was lame, " Sapnap informs him matter-of-factly. "Not your best comeback. Come on. It won't be that bad. You don't have to hide from him out here."

George resists the urge to scream. He *can't* explain what happened in Lit to Sapnap. He can't explain the way Shakespeare's words on Dream's lips had made him feel. The memory fans the hot embers inside of George, still smoldering, and he roughly jerks his thoughts away.

"Just—don't be obnoxious, okay?" George begs. "Don't say anything. *Please*."

Sapnap nods, surprisingly serious. "Okay," he says, but he nudges George's shoulder with his own when he slips past the other boy. "I can do that. I'll be your wingman, George."

George groans as he follows Sapnap into the class, all of his senses on high alert. "Please don't."

Sapnap shoots him a grin and pushes George in the direction of his seat. "All is fair in love and war," he tells George, sounding extremely self-satisfied. George flips him off in response and ignores his indignant splutter.

When George reaches his desk, trepidation clear in the lines of his body, he hesitates. At that moment, Dream looks up at him, almost shocked to see George, and something unspoken passes between them. George couldn't say whether he feels the impact of a thousand words or three in that instance.

He slides into the chair, murmuring a soft, "Sorry," when his foot brushes against Dream's shin.

"George!" Dream says brightly. He sounds... *off*, almost, like he's pulling on a mask to hide his true feelings. George is reminded, suddenly, of Hamlet's antic disposition. "You're back."

George nods. "Unfortunately," he mutters. He tries not to meet Dream's eyes. "I wasn't feeling well. Can I—Do you have the Lit notes from yesterday?"

A beat passes. Then Dream nods, blinking. He seems unfazed at the mention of AP Lit. Leaning down to rummage in his bag, he pulls out a stack of papers out and hands them to George. "I tried to take some notes for you, but I wasn't sure what you usually focus on, so they might not be any good." He's watching George closely, almost hovering, as if he's worried about how George will react.

As strange as that is, Dream taking notes *for George* is stranger still. "You... took notes for me?"

George asks blankly. Out of the corner of his eye, he sees Sapnap throw him a thumbs-up from across the classroom, and he purposefully ignores their mutual friend. "That's new."

Dream flushes a little. "Yeah, well... you weren't answering my texts. I thought you might have gotten sick with, like, *consumption* or something." He knocks George's shoulder with his own, lightly. Still testing the waters. "I can't be the best in the class without you there to spur me on."

George splutters. "What the fuck—I didn't have *consumption*, you asshole!" It sounds like Dream's laugh is being pulled forcibly from his lungs as he wheezes for breath at the expression on George's face. "And you're not the best in the class! I am!"

"Not without my notes," Dream points out.

"Oh, fuck you." George is grinning, though, looking up at Dream with an exasperated expression. He's glad for this easy return to normalcy, the familiar banter between them. His chest feels so full he thinks it might burst.

The thought is quiet when it comes, a footnote to George's racing heart: *I really, really like Dream.*

And then, a moment later: *I'm in love with him.* George's heart sinks when the realization of what that entails hits him.

Holy shit. He's well and truly fucked.

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Dream's notes are neatly organized and color-coded—a stark contrast to George's own notetaking style, which involves scribbling down his ideas on lined paper like an afterthought. George draws stick figures in his margins, writes particularly poetic language, doodles Dream's face.

Alright. So that last one is a little embarrassing. George is clearly doomed to be a motherfucking high school cliché: drawing pretty boys during class. It's not something he can't handle, though, so he devotes time during his study hour after school to pore over Dream's notes with vigor. Dream has even marked down quotes he thinks *George* will like on a separate page, titled neatly in black pen.

George flips briefly through the stack, getting a sense for what he'd missed the last two days before he reads Dream's notes again. As he's sorting through the neat pages, however, something slips out from within the stack and falls on the floor.

Grumbling, George leans down to pick up the stray piece of paper—then freezes. It's not a page of notes. Not at all. It's an envelope, creased a little at the edges but otherwise intact. Written in neat black lettering on the front is *For George*, leaving no doubt as to the note's recipient.

Blood rushing in his ears, he turns the envelope over and carefully opens it, sliding his fingers beneath the envelope in a gentle caress. When he slides the letter out of the envelope and unfolds it, his eyes scan over the paper eagerly. Almost immediately, he feels his heart rate pick up.

*My dear George,*

*Fuck. What an awful start already. This is incredibly embarrassing. I just know you're going to make fun of me for writing you a letter. I can already hear your voice—"What the fuck, Dream? Who even writes letters anymore?"—but I can't say this to your face. I've tried. I really have. So you're going to have to put up with my bullshit for a little while longer. Sorry not sorry.*

*Maybe I'll put it like this: my own words are clumsy. I feel like there's cotton in my mouth whenever*

*I see you. I stumble over my sentences. I can't fucking speak, not anymore, so I'm gonna use someone else's words. Shakespeare's, to be exact. I hope that's okay with you.*

*Anyway. Sonnet 75— So are you to my thoughts as food to life / Or as sweet seasoned showers are to the ground. I think of you so often, George. At first, I thought it was anger, rivalry, hatred, whatever. A fixation. A drive to be better.*

*But it's not. Even when we're apart, I can't stop thinking about you. About your eyes. They're so pretty, did you know that? About your face. Your hands—holding a pencil, tapping on the desk, whatever.*

*And sonnet 18— But thy eternal summer shall not fade / Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st / Nor shall death brag thou wand'rest in his shade / When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st. Did you know that Shakespeare was probably bisexual? It's not a surprise, considering his sonnets, but still. It's kind of nice to know, actually. Comforting. When he talks about his lover's beauty being immortalized in his poetry... I think it reminds me of you. Your drive, your motivation to be remembered. Your competitive spirit.*

*~~Love~~—I really like you, George. If it's not clear already. And I'm sorry if I pushed too far on Friday. That wasn't okay. You're amazing, and I don't deserve you. Not even as a rival.*

*Christ, I'm sorry that I'm too much of a coward to say this to your face. I feel like a middle schooler sending one of those stupid notes to their crush. "Will you go out with me? Check yes or no. "*

*But—seriously—I'll be in room A212 after school if you want to talk. Art club. You know the drill. If you don't want this... then that's fine, too. We can go back to being friends/rivals/enemies who quote sonnets platonically at each other. But I have a feeling that you're not going to want that.*

*Fuck. I don't know why I wrote this all down. I don't even know if you're going to read this. Maybe this letter will fall out of your pocket in the hallway and some dumbass freshman will get to it first. If that's the case—fuck off, frosh.*

*Sigh. Here goes nothing.*

*~~With love~~*

*~~Thanks~~*

*~~Sincerely~~*

*Yours,*

*Dream.*

George feels like his entire world has tilted on its axis. He stares at the letter; reads it once, twice, three times. Spreads his fingers across the neat handwriting on the page, hands shaking.

Dream *likes* him. Dream *likes* likes him. Dream thinks about George. Dream can't *stop* thinking about George.

His heart feels like it's about to rip out of his chest. It beats a steady rhythm, faster and faster: *Dream. Dream Dream Dream DreamDreamDreamDreamDream*. George can't breathe.

He stands up abruptly, sending his chair flying back. A few other patrons in the school library shoot him a scathing look, but he's too busy gathering up his things to care. Once he has his laptop and the Lit notes are stuffed awkwardly into his bag, he stumbles out of the library.

Room A212 is on the second floor in the A-wing, which just so happens to be the wing furthest from the library. George practically sprints down the hallway, nearly colliding with a couple of freshmen and mumbling a quick apology underneath his breath. He clutches the letter to his chest, puffing out a breath as he slides to a stop in front of A212.

A few art kids shoot George confused looks as he heads into the art room. It's a blur of color and movement — people arguing, laughing, painting all at once. He feels lost in the chaos of creativity, glancing around at the pandemonium that surrounds him, before his eyes lock with a familiar hazel gaze and his breath goes still.

Dream commands his attention, even from across the room. They stare at each other as if no one else exists, as if they are two stars in an otherwise dark sky.

George's feet move without conscious thought. He takes one step, then another, until finally he's across the room and he's staring up at Dream. The noise around them quiets to a dull whisper as Dream says, "You came." He sounds rocked to the core, like he didn't actually expect George to show up.

"Of course I came," George says. His voice sounds tinny to his own ears.

"I didn't think you were going to."

George looks down at his feet. He's still clutching the letter to his chest. How humiliating. "I got your letter."

"It's embarrassing."

George snorts and wisely chooses not to rise to the bait. "I didn't know you felt that way."

"I do," murmurs Dream, gazing down at George like he's the most important thing in the world. "I think you're incredible. George —" He breaks off, realizing for the first time, perhaps, that they are surrounded by other people. "Come with me," he finishes, and he takes George's hand and *pulls*.

George follows Dream back out in the hallway, up a familiar set of stairs, and out onto the roof of the school. He'd follow Dream anywhere, he thinks — there's not much he wouldn't do for the other boy.

The wind whips at their clothes and hair, a gentle breeze that's slightly on the cold side for late October. Dream turns to George, still clutching his hand, and says, "Here. We're alone."

"Are we allowed to be up here?" George asks; Dream shrugs.

"I don't know. No one's stopped me before."

They stand there for a moment in silence, letting the quiet speak for them and the wind rage around them.

Abruptly, Dream tightens his grip on George's hand, bringing it to his lips for a soft kiss as he gazes down at George. "*If I profane with my unworthiest hand / This holy shrine, the gentle sin is this—*"

George laughs, delighted. "Dream!" he exclaims.

Dream continues his recitation, still grinning, still clutching George's hand like it's a lifeline. "*My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand / To smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss.*"

George knows the following lines by heart, but he doesn't say them out loud. Instead, he gazes up at Dream, letting the hesitation stretch out between them. "Did you really mean what you said?" he asks after a moment, resisting the urge to kick at the roof with his shoe. "About Shakespeare? About — About me?"

"Yeah," Dream breathes. He reaches out, runs a hand along George's cheek, as if he can't quite believe what he's seeing. Or what he's saying. The touch makes a pleasant electricity buzz through George from the point of contact. "I did. And I meant what I said on Friday, too. I can't compare you to a summer's day, George. You are far more lovely and far more temperate."

George blinks back the tears forming in his eyes, cheeks stung red by the chill in the air. "So are you," he whispers, before Dream leans down and closes the distance between them with a soft kiss, and George thinks, *oh*.

Maybe Shakespeare had felt this way, writing his sonnets all those years ago. Maybe he'd felt the rush of love, of longing, the clear admiration of his lover. Maybe that was why he'd chosen to immortalize them in ink — maybe it hurt less that way, letting someone go.

But George doesn't ever plan on letting Dream go.

"How's that for an apology?" Dream says when he finally pulls away. He still has an arm wrapped around George's shoulders, and he pulls the smaller boy closer.

George grins, punching him lightly in the arm. He's sure he has an idiotic smile on his face, but he can't bring himself to care. "Passable," he allows.

Dream laughs his tea-kettle laugh. "Shut up and kiss me."

And so George does.

## End Notes

if you're interested, the sonnets that dream quotes in the first part are (in order) sonnet 12, sonnet 18, and sonnet 57. he also briefly quotes romeo and juliet near the end, starting with the line *if i profane with my unworthiest hand*.

kudos and comments are appreciated! :DD you can find me on [twitter](#).

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!